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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003772

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TAGS: [IZ](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: MALIKI PLANS GENERAL AMNESTY; BASRA PIC
CHALLENGES; DIYALA CLC INTEGRATION LOOMS LARGE; BUDGET

REF: BAGHDAD 03721

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Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Ryan Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: At the November 11 Ministerial Council on National Security (MCNS) meeting, PM Maliki stated his intention to proclaim a general amnesty; Ambassador Crocker responded that this was a bold move that the U.S. supported and could work with the GoI on the details. Maliki also pushed the Armed Forces commander to proceed with targeted security operations in Basra and prepare for the likely reaction to increased operations. A long general discussion on integration of Concerned Local Citizen (CLC) groups into security structures in Diyala revealed ongoing confusion in the GOI on its relationship with CLCs and which Iraqi authorities could hire police. Maliki resolved the issue by stating clearly that the National Reconciliation Committee's remit, and its procedures, should be applied countrywide.

Amnesty Plans Announced

¶2. (S) Late in the meeting, while discussing integration of CLCs into Iraqi security structures, Maliki declared his intention to proceed with a general amnesty for those who had been detained for bearing arms against the GOI. He implied that many of these had been duped. Ambassador Crocker expressed support for a general amnesty, calling it a bold move. He also noted that it was an important and complex issue and looked forward to further discussions on the matter. (Note: Maliki had raised this issue on November 8 with LTG Odierno, REFTEL. End Note.)

Basra

¶3. (S) Maliki had opened the meeting asking for an update on the security situation in Basra, in particular operations by ISF in preparation for Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC) in mid to late December. CHOD Babakir Shawkt responded that Basra security had not been discussed as planned at the last Crisis Action Cell (CAC) due to other pressing matters. (Note: During the CAC, topics discussed were the vetting process for transitioning CLCs into the Iraqi Police, transitioning CLCs into civil service type jobs, movement of Iraqi forces out of Baghdad, and the security situation in Diyala. End Note.) CHOD reminded Maliki he had agreed to extend Gen. Mohan's mandate in Basra.

¶4. (S) The Counter-Terrorism Director noted that 21 targets had been identified in Basra and ISF, in particular Special

Operation Forces and Counter-Terrorism squads, were preparing to act against them. Maliki instructed CHOD to take action as quickly as possible but also to prepare for the reaction of the opposition forces and/or their supporters in the populace. All agreed that being prepared for a reaction was a good practice and part of standard operations planning. The Counter-Terrorism Director also sought support, specifically air support, from coalition forces for the operations to which LTG Odierno agreed.

Diyala CLCs

15. (S) National Security Advisor Muwaffaq Rubaie turned the discussion to Diyala and questions on the CLCs, noting that intel reports had raised concerns about the situation in Diyala. He noted that MNC-I hosted a visit to the province earlier that day, which included S/I Director David Satterfield, the Minister of Interior, Iraqi Ground Forces Command, the National Reconciliation Committee, the Diyala Operations Center, and the Provincial Governor. The field visit had been very successful for gaining firsthand knowledge of the situation. Violence was down, delivery of service (water, electricity, etc.) was improved, and some 300 families had returned.

16. (S) Turning to next steps, Rubaie opined that the CLCs were a temporary solution, and thought must be given on what to do with them. How many could be put on the government payroll? He also note friction between the CLC volunteers and the police, and that some of the CLC groups had been infiltrated by Al-Qaeda, with 48 CLC volunteers having been arrested for abuse of power, theft, or other crimes. LTG Odierno intervened, noting that most of the members of these groups are good people. Agreeing that there are of course some bad volunteers, he highlighted the fact that those arrested are usually turned in by other volunteers. The CHOD concurred with this assessment.

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17. (S) Rubaie shifted his comments to questions about hiring practices for police in Diyala province, especially the need for balance (sectarian) in the police force. A long discussion then ensued on how many more police the province needs, how many will be drawn from the CLCs, whether to shift them from outside the city of Baquba into the city. The Diyala Support Committee is hiring thousands of police from the rural areas and not working through the Provincial Director of Police or MoI, outside of the policy developed by the National Reconciliation Committee. PM Maliki emphasized the need to purge the current police of bad actors before hiring more from CLCs or self-established armed groups. LTG Odierno suggested that the process being used in Baghdad be taken out to the provinces, to get the National Reconciliation Committee involved in the police vetting and hiring process. Ambassador Crocker emphasized the critical importance of these Committees, underlining the need to provide them the resources and personnel to do their work. Maliki agreed that this vetting should take place under the remit of the National Reconciliation Committee, whose procedures should be applied countrywide.

18. (S) Rubaie then laid out thirteen points for progress with CLCs in Diyala (Note: this is still a working list that differed somewhat from the twelve points Rubaie laid out earlier in the day during the Diyala visit. End Note) Several points generated extended discussion, especially point 10.

- 1. there has been very good security progress in those areas where CLCs are operating
- 2. a positive role for CLCs exists
- 3. note there have been CLC violations that must be addressed
- 4. GOI needs to develop a vision for the role of the

National Reconciliation Committee and Diyala Support Committee, in order to deconflict responsibilities
--5. form a cleansing committee or procedure to weed out bad actors in the CLCs
--6. enhance Rule of Law within the police forces
--7. greater coordination is needed between all parties; involve the Governor
--8. a political format is needed to absorb the leadership of the &armed groups⁸ into the political process (Maliki noted with would need Council of Representatives (COR) discussion and concurrence)
--9. ISF are responsible for security; voluntary groups are in a supportive role only
--10. expedite the process for police hiring and ensure full vetting of the CLC individuals
--11. extend the work of the National Reconciliation Committee outside of Baghdad
--12. define the roles and authorities of provincial and local governments in the CLC process.
--13. expedite the General Amnesty policy and be clear on who is to be included

¶9. (S) In discussion on increased hiring, Maliki and Rubaie raised questions about the vetting process, noting that someone could pass the criminal background check but there might be intelligence that would disqualify someone for service in the police forces. LTG Ali, IGFC Commander, cautioned against using allegations to disqualify otherwise acceptable candidates. Maliki also noted that a general amnesty from criminal prosecution would not protect from civil suits. Responding to the CHOD, the PM suggested police might be hired on a probationary basis to ensure bad actors do not infiltrate the ISF. He closed his comments by stating that the GOI must stand with the voluntary groups but vet the police force candidates carefully to avoid problems.

Budget Issues

¶10. (S) The Minister of Finance (FinMin) outlined the overall budget for 2008 as well as the reasons behind a nine billion USD allotment for the MOD and MOI vice ten billion requested. This includes funding for the intel services and the Counter Terrorism directorate. He noted that the nine billion USD represented 23 percent of the national budget, while the average in the Gulf Region is 5-6 percent of national budgets are used for security. (Note: 23 percent appears incorrect: 9 Bn USD is about 19 percent of 48 Bn USD. End Note.) He also noted that Iraq continues to deposit five percent of its oil revenue to pay compensation for the 1991 invasion of Kuwait. Negotiations with the IMF had allowed Iraq to use a higher benchmark oil price for budget planning purposes, up to 57 USD/barrel vice 50 USD/barrel.

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¶11. (S) The Minister of Interior (IntMin) raised questions about the method for distributing funds to the provinces, expressing a desire to have leftover funds from a previous budget year provided to MOI to buy equipment. The FinMin replied that he only had authority to shift five percent of the budget, explaining this is how he had paid for the Chinese weapons. LTG Dubik intervened, noting that the Ministry of Interior needs funds for its forces, in particular for equipment, training, and personnel. Whether it is new funding or funding transferred from previous years is irrelevant - the MOI needs increased funding. LTG Odierno added that to build up the Army and Police from scratch is expensive, but the sustainment of those forces will cost less in future years. In response to the PM's question on how to fix the problem, the FinMin suggested that the IntMin talk to the appropriate COR Committees and to the political party blocs in the COR.

Good News

¶12. (U) MG Scott presented a short briefing outlining the success of MNF-I in identifying and using local vendors/contractors. He reported that from August through October 2007, over 3000 contracts had been awarded to 1035 vendors throughout Iraq at a total value of 624 million USD - 331 million for construction, 172 for services, and 121 for commodities. MG Scott also noted that these contracts had generated 58,000 jobs for Iraqis. PM Maliki welcomed the good news.

Accountability and Justice Law

¶13. (S) Wrapping up the meeting, the Deputy Minister of State for National Security noted that the Accountability and Justice Law (De-Baathification Law) will be passed this week or at the latest next week. He explained that the first draft would be presented and voted down, thus allowing the second draft to be voted on and passed. S/I Ambassador David Satterfield interjected that it had taken 10 weeks for this legislation to move forward from the August 26 declaration of intention. He noted that President Bush was very concerned about the long delay in passing this very important legislation, adding that its passage will be a strong signal of political progress. Maliki took the point and assured Satterfield that the legislation would pass this week or next.

¶14. (U) Ambassador Satterfield did not have an opportunity to clear this message.

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